

didn't want to point fingers and I don't think that we necessarily need to either. Let's say that there is enough blame to go on both sides. The Department of Public Institutions did not make it clear as to the situation, as to the budget, as to the waiver and the regions and that lack of clarity moved forward in a way that was not the wisest and ended up making commitments that could not be funded and we have a mess, we have a mess right now in the mental retardation system. It's a mess that cannot be solved by simply throwing money at the problem. It's going to take a longer term look at the situation. That look is going to be part of an interim study the Health and Human Services Committee will work on this next interim to look at further legislation next year. The part of the solution in the short term is to include language that you will find on page 28 that provides that the Department of Public Institutions will start something new. It will start to contract individually for clients with the regions and with private providers to find exactly what services will be provided to each of those clients to know what it will cost, what they will provide in funding and what they will get back for those services. It is a modest step, I believe, to get a handle on the problem of funding of mental retardation in our state. It is not all that some people would like to see changed in our system but, for the short term to those taxpayers out there wondering how we got into the problems that we're into, it will attempt to address how we need to improve the communication and improve the accountability that I think is necessary. I think I gave you the wrong page on which to look, page 26 is the actual language that we need to look at. What you will find is the changes that Senator Coordsen is proposing would basically bring us back to the old system of sending money and it's allocated under this amendment on a percentage basis. It does not provide for individual client contracts. It does more generally provide for by-region funding and the only way in which there is any accountability for services rendered would be by meeting certain minimum standards and not by any particular contract. I think what you do is you lead the possibility back to the same problem that led us into the situation where we're facing this multimillion dollar shortfall. I don't think anybody wants to see any mentally retarded individual lose services or be hurt. I would hope that we can continue to discuss this issue and perhaps there may be some modest adjustment in funding that would be in order. But I would suggest adopting this amendment would be a mistake. It would be one thing to come back forward and have a reasonable request for an adjustment in funding that